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AGRICULTURAL SITUATION REVIEW.

Mon., Jan. 9/28

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ANNOUNCEMENT: "Every year has its good and bad effects in agriculture, but on the whole, 1927 was apparently more good than bad". That's how the Little Blue Book briefly reviews the year that's just passed over the hill. In today's chat, we outline the Agricultural Situation for December as told by the Bureau of Agricultural Economics, U. S. Department of Agriculture, taking our information from the Little Blue Book which the Department releases on the first of every month. Please stand by.

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No two years come out the same for the farmer but, on the whole, 1927 was more good than bad--- and better than 1926.

That's what the Department of Agriculture specialist say in the Little Blue Book issued on January 1, 1928.

Listen, and we'll tell you why.

1927 brought a measure of recovery, following the slump of 1926, to the Cotton Belt and also a fairly good year in the other main producing sections. There was one exception: The central and eastern section of the Corn Belt. Over much of this important farm area there was a poor corn crop. This fact, coupled with the slump in hog prices, left that section with a disappointing season.

The 1927 crop season was something like the one before that. Very backward weather delayed the spring work. Later on, heavy rains hindered haying and harvest work and stimulated damage to the crops by insect pests. A remarkably warm, dry September and October pieced out the growing season, however, so that total production of the main growing crops was slightly better than the 10-year average.

The value of the principal crops in 1927--- based on prices of December 1st--- was about 9-1/2 billion dollars as compared with a little over 7-3/4 billion dollars for the 1926 crops. This was an increase of more than 235 million dollars for 1927.

According to the December estimate, about 10 per cent more winter wheat was sown this fall than a year ago. The greatest increase was in the central Corn Belt States.

The Swine industry was hit last spring by a slump in the market, especially the European market. This slump continued through the season with a level of prices somewhat below the two previous years.

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The other live-stock industries have fared relatively well, however. Dairy men have operated with a liberal margin between milk and feed prices. Beef cattle prices have climbed steadily and the cattlemen are beginning to see daylight again. They have now rounded out a six-year period of prosperity.

Beef buyers will be interested to know that the reports of December 1st indicated a marked reduction in the number of cattle on feed this fall--though there was a tendency finally to take on cattle as improvement developed in the corn crop and in fat cattle prices.

As to lambs--Colorado and western Nebraska appear to have more than 2 million head on feed, compared with 955 thousand head last year. The Corn Belt, however, reports around 750 thousand fewer western lambs on feed than last year and the Far West probably 200 thousand fewer.

Last month's pig survey shows an increase of 11 per cent in the fall pig crop of 1927 over the fall crop of 1926. The report suggests the probability that six to eight per cent fewer sows will farrow next spring than last spring, though.

ALL TOLD, 1927 WAS A YEAR OF WELL-BALANCED PRODUCTION. IT BROUGHT THE PRICE LEVEL OF FARM PRODUCTS THIS FALL BACK UP NEAR THAT OF TWO YEARS AGO, HIGH AS THE LOWEST SINCE 1920.

Now let's take a bird's-eye view of the agricultural key-regions.

In the North, the farmers spent most of December doing winter work indoors or in the woods. The weather was mild in the early part of the month, but the land was mostly too wet for plowing. Some genuine winter weather came along later in the month. Winter grain is reported to be in good condition despite the freezes and thaws following each other. The corn is mostly husked. Conditions remain generally favorable in the dairy industry. 1927 not much different from 1926 in this region.

Warmer weather damaged the tender truck crops early last month in the South. But the cold weather also stimulated butchering operations and a lot of pork is put away in good condition. Land in the South was so wet in December that plowing and planting of corn was held back, but the grain already in the ground was greatly benefitted by the rains. Only a few fields of cotton remain unharvested in eastern Arkansas, western Oklahoma and elsewhere. At average prices at the farms as of December 1st, the cotton crop of this year is worth one billion, 63 million dollars as compared with one billion, 122 million dollars a year ago. This is an increase of 131 million dollars. Since Christmas present for Southern planters.

The warlike conditions interrupted and delayed corn husking in the Corn Belt. This whole region is now settled for winter, doing the regular

center winter work. In spite of a lack of snow cover during some of the recent freezes, the winter wheat is in fine condition generally in this section. Iowa and some other sections report flu and some other hog diseases. There has been a marked reduction in the number of western lambs fed in the corn belt this fall as compared with the fall of 1936. Cattlemen are generally discouraged with the position of their industry and with the market outlook for beef cattle. The grain crop is valued at an increase of 365 million dollars this year over the 1936 figure, as based on average prices at the 1936 December 1st--- although the bulk of the crop is fed this year and not sold.

Stepping into the Great Belt, we find the wheat dormant, but in good condition, in eastern Kansas and northward. But in the plains territory of western Kansas and southward, the grain had a hard struggle to get above the ground because of drought. After it did come up, the plants were frozen back over a wide area last month. The Report of December 21st, indicated a 10 per cent increase in winter wheat sown this fall as compared with a year ago, although the largest increases were in the central States. In general, 1937 was rated a favorable year among wheat growers.

Winter is on in earnest throughout the northern regions of the Range Country. The ranges are mostly covered and stock has suffered considerably from severe weather. Feeding is generally necessary. In the south where the ranges are open, feed is nevertheless short in many areas, due to lack of moisture. Snow covered the winter wheat in much of the north, though there hasn't been so much snow in Wyoming and Colorado. There's a heavy increase in lamb feeding in Colorado and western Nebraska. Cattlemen are more cheerful, but there's a tendency now on the part of the conservative ranchers and bankers to watch developments carefully in both cattle and sheep. In general, 1937 was a profitable and encouraging year for the range country.

Farmers have settled down for winter in the northern sections of the Pacific Coast. Many reports come in, showing loss of winter wheat acreage following the unusually heavy fall rains. Low temperatures hit many areas in western Oregon and Washington last month, but the farmers report a 250 per cent increase. Heavy frosts visited California during December, but no great damage to the citrus groves is reported however. Pacific Coast farmers are busy just now with their winter crops--- pruning vineyards and orchards. Some stockmen are finding it necessary to feed range livestock. The year is well wrapped up for the year in this country and the knowledge is that 1937 was a reasonably profitable year.

So, in all up, the Report ent specialists estimate that the total value of about 600 million crops in 1937 was about 8-1/2 billion dollars, an increase of 635 million dollars over 1936. The greatest increases in value this year over 1936 were for corn, cotton, barley and oats. The only

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really large decrease in value this year was the 113-million-dollar drop in potatoes, although wheat, hay, apples, peaches, and some other crops show decreases running from 10 to 50 million dollars.

The acreage of the principal crops increased by 169 thousand acres in 1937 over the 1926 figure. Yields averaged 2.1 per cent lower this year, however, although the 1937 yields still average 2.5 per cent above those of the last 10 years.

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ANNOUNCEMENT: This concludes today's AGRICULTURAL SITUATION REVIEW. Station _____ will broadcast the January summary on February 6. Watch for it.

